

The Bride Valley Telephone Service for Sunday 28th August 2022

*At the beginning of our services in church today we will light a candle,
you may wish to light a candle at home too.*

Welcome and Opening Scriptures

Praise the Lord! Happy are those who fear the Lord, who greatly delight in his commandments. Their descendants will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. *Psalm 112. 1,2*

Hymn: ACNY 66. There's a wideness in God's mercy (OL 55054)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 There's a wideness in God's mercy
like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in his justice
which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth's sorrows
are more felt than up in heaven;
there is no place where earth's failings
have such kindly judgement given. | 3 There is plentiful redemption
through the blood that has been shed;
there is joy for all the members
in the sorrows of the head.
There is grace enough for thousands
of new worlds as great as this;
there is room for fresh creations
in that upper home of bliss. |
| 2. For the love of God is broader
than the measure of our mind,
and the heart of the eternal
is most wonderfully kind.
But we make his love too narrow
by false limits of our own;
and we magnify his strictness
with a zeal he would not own. | 4 <i>Second half of tune:</i>
If our love were but more simple
we should take him at his word;
and our lives would be all gladness
in the joy of Christ our Lord. |

Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)

(One Licence 55054)

Confession

Let us return to the Lord our God and say to him:

Father, we have sinned against heaven and against you.

We are not worthy to be called your children.

We turn to you again.

Have mercy on us, bring us back to yourself

As those who once were dead

But now have life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquities and cleanse us from all sin. **Amen.** (based on Psalm 51)

Collect

Let us pray: **O God, you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen**

Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 25: 6-7

⁶ Do not put yourself forward in the king's presence
or stand in the place of the great;
⁷ for it is better to be told, 'Come up here',
than to be put lower in the presence of a noble.

New Testament Reading: Hebrews 13:1-8,15-16

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.* Let marriage be held in honour by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers. Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.' So we can say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?'

Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever. Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Gospel Reading: Luke 14: 1, 7-14

On one occasion when Jesus* was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.

When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honour, he told them a parable. 'When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honour, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, "Give this person your place", and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, "Friend, move up higher"; then you will be honoured in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.'

He said also to the one who had invited him, 'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor,

the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'

Reflection

'One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched.' Not only was Jesus being carefully watched, he was also watching carefully!

Have you ever seen the television programme 'Come Dine with Me'? I like that programme, mainly because I like the food aspect of it – I love cooking and I like seeing what the hosts make for their guests to eat. But I also like the social aspect of it – the guests all meeting each other as strangers, weighing each other up as they move from evening to evening. The worst part for me is when the guests sneak into the host's bedroom to discover the most embarrassing items to later humiliate their host with around the dinner table! At the end of each meal, the guests give their hosts a 'score' between 1 and 10, as to how good the food and the hospitality was, after their careful observation of all that has taken place.

When Jesus went for a meal at this Pharisee's home, he was being 'carefully watched.' This was because this meal was occurring on the Sabbath – the holy day of rest. Already Jesus been caught misbehaving on the Sabbath several times in Luke's gospel: by the synagogue leaders in chapter 13 when he had the audacity to heal someone on the Sabbath day; and in chapter 6, he got in trouble on a Sabbath with the Pharisees after some of his disciples had picked some grain from a field and ate it; and on another Sabbath day, Jesus healed a man with a withered hand. So now at this meal, again on a Sabbath day, Jesus was being watched carefully, lest he do anything else untoward. Lo and behold, in verses 2-6, which for some reason aren't included in our lectionary set reading, Jesus does indeed heal a man who is at the same dinner with him on this Sabbath! He says to the lawyers and the Pharisees there, 'Suppose one of you had a son – or an ox! – that fell into a well. Are you going to tell me you won't pull him out straight away on the Sabbath day?' And they were speechless – they had no answer for that.

So Jesus was being carefully watched, but Jesus was also watching carefully what was happening at this dinner party. And he noticed how the other guests were picking the places of honour at the table. Guests of honour were seated close to the host, while those of lesser importance sat further away. What follows is a lesson from Jesus in humility. Jesus encourages humility by telling the people there that if they don't behave with humility, they risk humiliation.

Humility is good; humiliation is bad! Humility is about being humble, which is good; humiliation is about being caught out on something, which results in embarrassment, which is bad. In this case, the lesson was for the guests: 'all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.' This is good advice! Don't think too highly of yourself. Be modest. It's better to start from a lower position and be invited to move up than to put yourself ahead of others and then be asked to move further down.

Jesus also had a lesson for his hosts! It's also something we learn from 'Come Dine with Me' - that being a host carries with it responsibilities involving graciousness, generosity and a concern for the well-being of your guests. Here in our bible passage we see that Jesus observes something interesting that disturbs him: it's hospitality with strings attached. People in many cultures have the expectation of reciprocal invitation, where invites are only sent out to those who could be counted on to invite you back to theirs, next time. The

message from Jesus was this: don't just invite those who are in a position to do something for you - invite those who cannot give you anything in return. In his invitation to the heavenly banquet, Jesus wants to include the poor and the marginalised. Many of those who were originally invited didn't accept the invitation. Instead, the message was heard by those who were totally unexpected: sinners, gentiles, pagans - people quite different from the respected, orthodox Jews, the Pharisees, the elders and the teachers of the law. And finally, Jesus wanted to be clear – that if people desired to be included in his movement – if people would follow him, he wanted them to know that this kind of inclusive attitude was what it would cost. And so the challenge comes to us today. What does it mean to celebrate God's kingdom in our lives and in our churches so that the people at the bottom of the pile will find it 'good news'? We who have accepted the invitation to God's party are also called to become his co-hosts of unconditional hospitality. Amen.

Let us affirm our faith in God in the words of the Apostle's Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
And born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again,
He ascended into heaven,
And is seated at the right hand of God the Father.
He will come again to judge both the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy catholic church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body
And the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Lord of the Church, thank you for our church – the place, the people, the history and what it's meant to generations of people living near. Thank you for the people that have flowed in and out through the doors, faithful or searching, joyful or sad, hopeful or anxious. Thank you for the role the church has played in the lives of so many and the way the love of God has been made known in worship and service of others.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, we pray for the churches near us, all with their own treasured story; St Michael and All Angels in Littlebredy, St Peter's in Long Bredy, St Mary's in Litton Cheney, Chilcombe Church, St Mary's in Puncknowle, Holy Trinity in Swyre, St Mary's in Burton Bradstock and St Martin's in Shipton Gorge. We pray for their well-being and for creative relationships across this network of local churches, each centred on Christ and longing to make him known. In particular we pray for the Bride Valley to be a safe place for all, including the many visitors who understandably want to share this beautiful place for a holiday.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, we give thanks that across the country churches stand as great beacons, reminding people of your presence in their midst. There are church towers punching the sky and church spires piercing the horizon. Churches give soul to every community, and without them there's a vacuum in the centre of community life. Enable us to keep our churches open and available, flexible and forward-looking; sacraments of your love as outward and visible signs of your inward, invisible grace.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, here in Britain with the Queen as our governor and across Europe there are enormous numbers of churches speaking of the Christian heritage that gave birth to the institutions of government, the legal system, hospitals, schools, the arts, philanthropy and so much more. Help our continent not to renege on its past, but to value its heritage as a springboard to an ever more just, peaceful and compassionate future. Especially we pray for the recovery from the full effects of Covid19, on individuals and on workplaces and economies, not forgetting all those who have lost their lives to this deadly disease.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, across the world the centre of gravity for Christianity has moved south. Thank you for the huge growth in the worldwide Church. Thank you for the variety of expression in worship and church life, in mission, ministry and social engagement. We pray especially for the links we have in South Sudan, Bishop Rufus and his family from Lainya. Bless our brothers and sisters and continue to strengthen our fellowship with them.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, from *this church* to Salisbury Cathedral and beyond, we all belong to you; we have all heard your call, left our nets and followed you. We are not yet what we should be, but we are not stuck. Shape us into the Church you want us to become, to the glory of the Father, in the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Let us now pray the Lord's Prayer together

**Our Father who art in Heaven
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, forever and ever.
Amen.**

Hymn: ACNY 68. Purify my heart (CCLI 426298, OL 25057)

Purify my heart
Let me be as gold
and precious silver.
Purify my heart
Let me be as gold,
pure gold.
Refiner's fire,
My heart's one desire
Is to be holy
Set apart for you, Lord
I choose to be holy
Set apart for you, my Master
Ready to do your will.

Take my life, Lord,
And let it be.
Consecrated, Lord to thee.

Purify my heart,
Cleanser me from within
And make me holy,
Purify my heart
Cleanser me from my sin,
deep within.

Chorus

Brian Doerksen (b. 1965)

(CCLI 426298, One Licence 25057)

A special prayer for those of us who are unable to receive the sacrament at church today:

**Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples, 'I am with you always'.
Be with me today, as I offer myself to you. Hear my prayers for others and for myself, and keep me in your care.
help me to trust you now more than ever,
help me to know that you are with me,
help me to believe that nothing can separate me from your love revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

The service ends with the Peace

**Peace to you from God our Father who hears our cry.
Peace from his Son Jesus Christ whose death brings healing.
Peace from the Holy Spirit who gives us life and strength.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you. Amen

Sources: Common Worship, New Patterns for Worship, material from which is included here, are copyright© The Archbishops' Council 2000, 2002 and 2006 and published by Church House Publishing. Prayers of Intercession are based on prayers by +John Pritchard. Hymn words are printed under CCLI License Number: 2370586